

Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
Division of Special Education

PROBING QUESTIONS

Purpose: These questions are intended to assist a district while looking at and drilling down their data.

Essential Question # 2: Are students with disabilities achieving at high levels?*

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT (for questions pertaining to discipline, see below):

Data Review Questions

- How are students with disabilities doing in Communication Arts and Mathematics?
- Are students with disabilities making adequate yearly progress?
- Which groups of students are doing best/worst? What is the gap in performance between groups?
 - By disabled/non disabled
 - By disability category
 - By placements
 - By race/ethnicity
 - By free/reduced lunch rates
 - By grade level
 - By building
- How do the district's incidence and placement rates compare to the state?
- What does a trend analysis of assessment results show: similarities/differences between disabled and non-disabled, consistently at minimum acceptable level, no movement in trend, movement in wrong direction?
- How do placement categories compare with grade level results? Do IEP students have access to the general education curriculum?
- Are MAP participation rates higher or lower than the State rates? What could be done so that more students are participating?
- What is the percent MAP oral accommodation usage? How are those decisions made?

Instructional Programs/Models Questions

- What is the match between instruction and performance? What is being taught and on what specifically do students with disabilities and all students perform well or poorly?
- What instructional models are available to support access of students with disabilities to the general education curriculum (i.e., co-teacher, re-teaching, mastery

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learning, etc.)?

- Are instructional programs based on research based methodology?
- How much time is scheduled in the school day for communication arts, reading and math instruction?
- Is developmental reading provided above the elementary level?
- What activities ensure instruction for students with disabilities is aligned with grade level expectations?
- What is done when students including students with disabilities are NOT successful (i.e. when students are not making adequate progress)? How does district ensure students are re-taught material they have not mastered while maintaining progress within grade-level content?
- What are the district's measures to support all students in reaching proficient levels on statewide testing?
- For students in self-contained classes and/or segregated core curriculum classes, or separate schools, how is access to the regular education curriculum ensured?
- How does the district ensure that students with disabilities have the same opportunity to learn the same content as their non-disabled peers, even though they may need a different kind of instruction?

Professional Development Questions

- Are special education teachers members of general education curriculum development teams?
- Do special education teachers have an opportunity to provide input into the general education curriculum development teams?
- What professional development has been provided to special education and general education staff in aligning the local curriculum with the state content standards and benchmarks
- Is professional development chosen based on identified areas needing improvement to increase student performance?
- Is professional development about working with students with diverse learning needs provided to general education teachers and special education teachers?
 - Do staff development opportunities for all teachers include:
 - General education curriculum/learning standards
 - Collaboration
 - Learning strategies/modifications for diverse learners (differentiated instructional practices)
 - Reading achievement
 - Cultural differences
- How are teacher training and support needs determined to ensure teachers can effectively address learning needs through differentiated instruction aligned to academic grade level content?

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- What data has been collected to determine the effectiveness of professional development efforts in relation to student performance, LRE and accommodations?

Student Assessment Questions

- How does your public agency monitor to ensure that students with disabilities are progressing toward the achievement of their IEP goals? What is done when a student fails to make progress?
- What assessment methods are used to determine if students are making adequate progress?
- Are all students with disabilities included in all general statewide and district wide assessment programs? If not, why not?

Accommodations/Modifications Questions

- Do IEPs include statements of any individual appropriate accommodations that are necessary to measure the academic achievement and functional performance of the student on statewide and district wide assessments?
- Are individualized accommodations and modifications to instruction that support participation in the general education curriculum listed on IEPs and provided?
- How does the district determine accommodations on state-wide assessments that are individualized based on student need?

File Review Questions

- Do IEP present levels of performance describe progress made from previous year?
- Do IEP goals and objectives show evidence of sequential growth from year to year?
- Do IEPs include measurable annual goals including academic and functional goals to enable the student to be involved and make progress in the general curriculum and meet each of the student's other education needs, and the service and supports to enable the students to advance appropriately to attain those goals?
- Describe the process for the involvement of the general education teacher in the development of the IEP and the role of the general education teacher in the education of students with disabilities.
- What factors are considered to determine whether a student takes the MAP or the MAP-A? Do present level of performances and evaluation reports support these decisions?

Parental Involvement Questions

- What are the methods for informing parents of student progress?
- How does the district ensure that families understand the results of assessments?
- How does the district involve parents in student learning?

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- How are parents involved in improving services for students with disabilities?

Low Incidence Disabilities Questions

- What training that has been provided to staff working with students identified with low incidence disabilities?
- Does your agency have a sufficient number of qualified staff to provide the necessary services to students identified with low incidence disabilities?
- Are appropriate services identified for students with low incidence disabilities, and are those services listed on the IEPs and provided to the students?

DISCIPLINE:

Data Review Questions

- How do the rates of OSS and ISS for students with IEPs compare to students without IEPs?
- How do the rates of OSS and ISS by race/ethnicity for students with IEPs compare to students without IEPs?
- Are there significant discrepancies in the rates of long term suspensions and expulsions of students with IEPs, including by race/ethnicity, as compared to students without disabilities?
- What trends and patterns can be observed when disaggregated by ethnicity or race, gender, disability and educational environment?
- Are there differences in the type or length of removal for various groups of students?
 - By disabled/nondisabled
 - By disability category
 - By placement category
 - By race/ethnicity
 - By building
- What is the relationship between suspensions/ expulsions and performance on assessments?
- Are discipline office referral information analyzed as to who, what, when, where? What does the information show?
- How is discipline related to dropout/graduation rates?
- What do disciplinary data reported by educational environment (class vs. non-class time, general education vs. special education classroom) indicate?
 - By disabled/nondisabled
 - By disability category
 - By race/ethnicity

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Instructional Programs/Models Questions

- What is the impact of suspensions on access to general education curriculum and assessment results?
- How does the district ensure that behavioral supports, including instruction designed to teach alternative (or replacement) behaviors, are included in the IEPs of students with problem behaviors?
- What takes place at the building level to support students as they move from one setting to another (including non-classroom areas – bus, lunchroom, hallways)?
- What behavioral support programs are being used? Which buildings, grades, classrooms? How are staff trained in the use of such programs?
- Are alternatives to OSS available and being used?
- Are functional behavior assessments and behavior plans/goals developed and implemented to appropriately meet the needs of students with behavioral issues? Are behavior plans implemented consistently across teachers and buildings?
- What specific measures are taken into account to remove bias from behavioral policies?

Accommodations/Modifications Questions

- Do all behavioral expectations apply to all students, or can they be adjusted to accommodate different circumstances, for instance, making adjustments based on race/ethnicity or disability?

Professional Development Questions

- Are educators provided professional development regarding classroom management, discipline and behavior management?

File Review Questions

- What percent of current IEPs contain behavior plans? Behavior goals?
- Are behavior plans developed and for students who are given ISS or OSS?
- Do the results of file reviews indicate areas where improvement/correction is needed?

Parental Involvement Questions

- How are parents involved in improving services for students with disabilities?
- What process is used to connect families with outside agencies (e.g., mental health)? What resources does the district have to identify untreated mental health issues?

*Includes questions related to SPP Indicated 3 and 4